

wcgs news

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Creswell Makes News - Our State Magazine!

Creswell Featured in Magazine

The August issue of *Our State* (pages 18-23) has a good article about Creswell, written by Susan L. Comer with photography by Alan Watson. Of course, those folks had a jump start by enlisting the help of WCGS Member and one of our county's busy historians, Loretta (Rett) H. Phelps. If you are not a subscriber to this magazine but want to learn more about or keep up with North Carolina history and happenings, write: P.O. Box 4552 in Greensboro NC 27404 or call 800-948-1409 or send e-mail to: circulation@ourstate.com.

Queries:

Who were the parents, brothers and sisters, spouse(s), and children, birth, marriage, and death dates and places for these residents of North Carolina:

Benjamin Chesson; Born circa 1777; in 1800 Washington Co Census with wife (Probably Sarah Parremore, M. circa Jan 1800) and Small Child; in 1820 Census. A younger Benjamin Chesson, possibly a son, appears in later Washington Co records.

Caroline Chesson, Dau of Uriah Chesson and ??, married James Freeman.

Eveline Chesson, Dau of Uriah Chesson and ??, married William Smith (who was decd. by 1857).

Carolyn Chesson; listed in the 1850 Census for Tyrrell Co.

Charles Chesson; born circa 1780, Listed 1810 Washington Co Census.

Eli (Ely, Elijah) Chesson; Born circa 1785, Listed in 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840 Washington Co Census. Bought Land 28 Jan 1840 Wash. Co Db H 339 and Sold Land 30 Jan 1843, Wash. Co. Db H 559.

Georganna Chesson, B. Ca. 1857, Listed in 1860 Washington Co Census in household of Nathaniel and Leah Chesson; Parents?

Naomi ??; probably married _____ Chesson, born circa 1810; listed in 1850 Washington Co census with children: Fred (23), May (21), Charlotte (18), William (15), Charles (10), and Wilson (3). In the 1860 census Wilson is listed in a Phelps household; the others have not been located. In the 1870 census Charles Chesson is head of household at Lees Mill. In the 1880 census a Naomi Chesson is in the household of M. Alexander and Charlotte Alexander (probably Charlotte Chesson before marriage) with 3 children. Naomi may have been married to Eli Chesson. Did she marry Herman Bodwell on 25 Feb 1851?

Joseph Chesson; b. circa 1785, listed in 1810 Washington Co census.

Malachi Chesson; shown as property owner in Perquimans Co. DB H 237, Jan 16, 1773.

Martha Chesson listed in 1850 Tyrrell Co census.

Martha I. Chesson, born ca. 1854, listed in 1860 Washington Co census in household of Nathaniel and Leah Chesson; parents?

Sarah Chesson ca. 1697 orphan dau. of John Chesson decd. and "left destitute" after death of John Lilly; John Wheatly petitions to be guardian having married her "ant."

Uriah Chesson; born 5 July 1778, died 10 Feb 1850; listed in Washington Co census 1820, 1830 with large household; left NC about 1834 and went to Coosa Co, AL (1840 census); 2nd wife named Mary T. Fagan; left at least two older children in NC.

Maria Comstock, m. John Chesson (2nd wife), d. ca 1851.

?? Comstock, m. ca. 1800 Lucretia Chesson, dau of William and Priscilla Chesson.

Priscilla ??, m. ca. 1770 William Chesson.

Leah Fagan ?; born ca. 1801, married Nathaniel Chesson; possibly daughter of Stephen Fagan (b. circa 1755, d. circa 1813, m. 1st Mary Everitt, 2nd Anna ____).

Matilda Elizabeth Gaylord (b. 15 Apr 1849, Roanoke Island?, d. 14 Feb 1911 Mackeys, NC) m. Anson Taylor Knowles (b. 3 Sep 1846, d. 21 Jan 1919). May have been orphaned by age 1 (1850 census) and in household of Elizabeth Burgess with sister Louisa Gaylord, age 14. Louisa may have been nicknamed "Lizzie" and may have married ____ Morse and by 1860 the Morse family may have been out of NC, possibly in Norfolk, VA?

Abner Knowles; born Ireland?, listed 1786 Perquimans Co, may have been father of Thomas Knowles (b. circa 1815, d. circa 1860).

Cumfort Petit (†), sister of Jonas Petit(t) and a widow of John Cheston or Chesen in Sept 1696 according to NC Higher Court Records. May have been sister, sister-in-law, or aunt of Sarah Petitt who m. Joshua Scott in 1726; he was a Quaker. Comfort Petitt Chesen "ye Rellock of John Chesen desesed" married Edward Norrenton 8 April 1697.

Sally Spencer, b. est. 1805, d. bef 1860?, m. Hewette (Hugh) Armstrong 11 Jan 1826, Tyrrell Co.

Ellen Stubbs, b. ca 1818, d. before 1870, m. Thomas Knowles ca 1835.

John Swain, son of ??, m. 12 Apr 1780 Mary Chesson, dau of ??

Priscilla Swain, dau of John and ?? Swain, m. Samuell Chesson in 1778, may have been mentioned in will of John Swain in 1765 and in will of John Swain in 1787 (possibly grandfather and father?)

Will appreciate any information, especially with references or "proof" and will reimburse postage and copying. Eugene Chesson, 640 Cosmos Way, Prescott, AZ 86303-5049 (928) 778-6789.
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BELIEVE IT? ... OR NOT!

by Eugene Chesson

Almost every book on creating a family history has a section on reliability of data, and warns that

genealogists should double check even the most respected sources, whether a book, a pedigree chart, a census index, a census entry, etc. Misspellings of names by hurried or unlearned scribes, omissions of a portion of an original document being recopied, or even carelessness on the part of family members contribute to the problems of present-day researchers. Obviously, primary sources—those made at or near the time of the event and by someone central to that event, are likely to be more reliable than those which are secondary—made after time has passed by someone who may be compiling, abstracting, copying, or interpreting information from other sources. A good discussion of this topic will be found in *North Carolina Research, Genealogy and Local History*, by Helen F. M. Leary, 2nd Edition.

Just because a statement is found in a book, carved in stone, or appears on the Internet does not guarantee that it is correct. Even memories of some participants or descendants may prove to be incorrect, when cross-checked with other data. We genealogists and family historians must assume that until proven to our satisfaction, "It ain't necessarily so." The following are examples of the need for careful examination of information, based on my own experiences.

On the Internet at several locations, and on some family group sheets sent me over the years, will be found these birth and death dates for Hezekiah Chesson: born 26 October 1784, died 11 August 1869. Likely these reported dates come from his tombstone, which I have seen and photographed near Roper, NC. On that stone there also appears "64 y 9 m 16 d." So, let's do some arithmetic: born Oct 1784, add about 65 years, and we get 1849, *not* 1869! Did a stonemason or a family member use the wrong year for Hezekiah's death? Or did Hezekiah live much longer than the nearly 65 years recorded on this monument? Obviously, something is wrong on this single source of information!

Luckily, an old Bible has survived (I have a photocopy of the original) that lists birth and death dates for Hezekiah and others of his family.

The Bible entry shows: "Hezekiah Chesson Son of Joshua Chesson and Martha his Wife was borned oct the 26. 1784...Hezekiah Chesson Died August the 11th 1849 at 15 minets after 7 o'clock in the morning Aged 64 years 9 months and 16 days..." If we do the arithmetic with this information, the entries do check! But since we don't know who made those Bible entries or when, further checking may be wise. Fortunately, there is more data.

The 1850 Washington County, NC census, residence 62, shows Sarah Chesson, 53, with some children of Hezekiah but there is no entry showing him alive. At the time of the 1850 census a Mortality Schedule was prepared listing those who had died within the past year. Among them is "Hezekiah Chesson 75 M born NC Died July, farmer by profession, Died of old age." Well, whoever advised that census taker might have recalled information from memory since Hezekiah's age is about ten years off and the month of death is one month off. These two entries do support the August 11, 1849 death date found in the Bible and the 64y 9m 16d Bible and tombstone notations. Is there something else in the records? The division of the estate of Hezekiah was delayed, apparently because of his two marriages and because of the resulting two sets of children who could not agree on the estate. In a court record of 9 December 1868 we find repeated mention that Hezekiah Chesson is deceased and a list of his two sets of children plus reference to his will (I have not yet located a copy). If Hezekiah was deceased prior to the court case of December, 1868 then he must have died before August 11, 1869 as stated on the stone monument!

From the above, it is highly probable that this Hezekiah Chesson was born 26 October 1784 and died 11 August 1849. Thus, his tombstone and an official Mortality Schedule both contain errors.

So some records may have mistakes, but what about family Bibles? Certainly, family Bible records should be factual, since they likely were completed by people who knew and who lived near

the time of the recorded events. However, not all Bible entries can be believed. In a Chesson family Bible one of my great-grandfathers is shown married to a woman, with dates of birth and death for both. But in checking records of eastern North Carolina I have found no evidence to support this marriage. That great-grandmother had married another man a few years before my grandfather's birth and she had two children by her husband. There are census records and a will from which I deduced that this grandfather was most likely born out of wedlock and thus did not have full recognition as a child of that great-grandfather of mine. Twenty years ago I separately interviewed two elderly women who knew my ancestors and who always lived in the locale where my ancestors lived. Both stated they knew of no marriage. One even gave me several keepsakes from my great-grandmother that she had saved. Before our discussion, this woman had found no one who had expressed enough interest in my ancestor for her to pass along those items! Apparently, the recorder of the Bible entry either did not know there had been no marriage, or thought that the lack of a marriage would be embarrassing and so should be not be revealed.

Family historians work with census records and often calculate a date of birth from the age listed in a record, subtracting from a recorded date of death. But this is not always reliable. Sometimes an informant to the census taker might have guessed at an age, or might have falsified an age in order to appear younger. Consider this person in my ancestry:

Year:	1850	1860	1870	1880
Census Age:	18	23	39	50
Actual Age:	21	31	41	51

In 1860 this individual had just married a twenty-year-old spouse and may have wanted to appear to be closer to that spouse in age. Other people have been found to have aged only seven or so years in the ten years between censuses.

Irregularities in spelling of names are also common in records. In an old will I found the last name of the testator himself spelled three different ways, apparently by the person who was serving as scribe for that ill ancestor.

It pays to cross check and make use of as much information as can be found, while weighing the likely validity of each bit of information. Whenever possible, try to locate the originals of sources cited by other researchers. Otherwise, in compiling your family history you may inadvertently perpetuate mistakes originated by others.

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Johnny Swinson Writes

Answer to Eugene Chesson on Swinson:

Richard Swinson was the first Swinson in North Carolina who probably came from New Kent Co. in Virginia. He purchased land in what is now known as Washington Co. in 1712. The land was described as follows: "In ye fork of Kendrick Creek known by the name of Hawkins Neck on the south shore in the precinct of Chowan - 500 acres more or less."

Richard the first was born about 1650 in England and died between 24 April - 17 July 1716 in the Roper area of Washington Co. His wife was Elizabeth ?. Their children were:

1. William Swinson born before 1691 - died about 9 August 1758 in what is now Washington Co. Married Mary ?.
2. John Swinson the first - born before 1693 - died after 1775 in Pitt or Duplin Co.
3. Richard Swinson Jr. (II) born before 17116 - died after 17 June 1767 in Washington Co. Wife 1) Lurrana; 2) Elsie.
4. Katherine Swinson - born ? died ? Married Richard Kanaday.

More on children of Richard the first and wife Elizabeth:

1. William Swinson and wife Mary's children were:

- A. Mary Swinson married 1) Williams; 2) Bangall.
Her children were: 1) Welcome Williams; 2) William Williams.
- B. Elizabeth Swinson married 1) Samuel Durance; 2) John Harrison
Her children were: 1) Francis Durance.
2. John Swinson (The First) I believe he was married twice: 1) Lurana; 2) Elsie.
Children were:
 - A. Austin Swinson - born about 1730 - died before 1790 Duplin Co. Wife unknown.
 - B. Levi Swinson - born ? d. 1795 Martin Co., NC Wife unknown.
3. Richard Swinson II b. abt. 1700 - d. bfr. 4 November 1779; wife: Anne Blount; Children were:
 - A. Richard Swinson III b. abt. 1750 - d. aft. 1830 Wash. Co. Wife 1) Elizabeth Everett; 2) Chlo Burnham.
 - B. John Swinson II b. abt. 1730 - d. bfr. May 1807 Washington Co. wife: Susanna Parker of Duplin Co.
 - C. James Swinson - b. abt. 1730 - d. ?
 - D. Hanna Swinson - b. ? - d. ? Married Thomas Stubbs Jr. 8 Dec. 1774, Tyrrell Co, NC (area near Roper now Wash. Co, NC)
 - E. Elizabeth Swinson - b. ? - d. ?
 - F. Chloe Swinson - B ? - D ? Married Claeb (sp?) Bembridge.
 - G. William Swinson - B ? - D. aft. 1778 - Never married.
4. Katherine Swinson

Windley and Gaylord Line

To the WCGS,

We have been researching the Windley, Gaylord line from Washington Cty, NC and have found we are descendants of Jacob D. Windley's son Joseph N. Windley of Mackeys Ferry, NC. We have been trying to push this line back with very little success. We would appreciate contact from the WCGS members that can help with ancestors of Jacob, Mary A.? or other info. Joseph N. has an

extensive line of descendants in VA and MD, I can share GED files if you like.

We actually passed through the county in June 01 and had Lunch at Mackey's Marina and looked briefly at the Windley Cemetery in Plymouth. Very beautiful area.

Please pass this request on to others at WCGS that may have info on this line. Attached is a brief part of the early data we currently have on this line. Thanks, Stephen and Kathryn Williams / Windley) Garber

1. Jacob D.2 Windley (Henry E.1) was born Abt. 1812 in Washington County, NC, and died Bet. 1857 - 1860 in Washington County, NC. He married Mary A. Abt. 1840 in Washington Co, NC. She was born Abt. 1816 in Washington County, NC.

Notes for Jacob D. Windley: From the Washington Co. NC 1850 Census farmer Windley, Jacob d. age 38 networth \$600. Wife Windley, Mary A. age 34, sons Windley, Jos. N. age 7, Windley, William . age 3 and Windley, Henry age 1.

Notes by Steve Garber 7/15/01; Information at www.gurganus.org lists a Jacob Darden Windley born June 11, 1811, son of Henry E. Windley and Penelope Barrow b. Feb. 9, 1789. In the Windley research papers from Ernestine Hurst, there is a Jacob D. Windley, Jr listed on page 37 as a "test" to Aaron Windley's will dated March 1838.

Notes for Mary A.:

In the 1860 Washington County, NC Census, Mary A. Windley was listed in dwelling 403 in Mackey's Ferry with Joseph C. age 17, William W. age 13, Virginia age 6 and Pollie A. age 3. Jacob must have died between 1857-1860.

More About Mary A.: Residence: 1860, Mackey's Ferry PO

More About Jacob Windley and Mary A.: Marriage: Abt. 1840, Washington Co, NC

Children of Jacob Windley and Mary A. are:

- i. Joseph Norcumb3 Windley, b. Abt. 1843, Washington County, NC.
- ii. William W. Windley, b. Abt. 1847; m. Emma Jane Harrison, March 15, 1866, Baptist Church.

More About William Windley and Emma Harrison: Marriage: March 15, 1866, Baptist Church

- iii. Henry Windley, b. Abt. 1849.
- iv. Virginia Windley, b. Abt. 1856, Washington County, NC.

Notes for Virginia Windley: In 1880 Census; Nurse in Family of L.H. Hornthal

- v. Pollie A. Windley, b. Abt. 1857.

Generation No. 2

2. Joseph Norcumb3 Windley (Jacob D.2, Henry E.1) was born Abt. 1843 in Washington County, NC. He married Alice Comfort Gaylord May 01, 1866 in Prot. Episcopal Church., daughter of John Gaylord and Sarah Harrison. She was born Abt. 1849 in Washington County, NC.

Notes for Joseph Norcumb Windley: Civil War Records show Joseph N. Windley enlisting May 3, 1861 at age 18. Served in the 3rd NC Cavalry CO K and 17 NC Infantry, CO G and H discharged as Private.

Marriage Notes for Joseph Windley and Alice Gaylord: In Marriage Register of Washington County, North Carolina. Married by T.B. Haughton, Minister, "Prot. Eps. Church". More About Joseph Windley and Alice Gaylord: Marriage: May 01, 1866, Prot. Episcopal Church, Children of Josepy Windley and Alice Gaylord are:

- i. Alan4 Windley, b. Abt. 1867.
3. ii. Guy F. Windley, b. Abt. 1870, Washington County, NC; d. 1913.

Generation No. 3

3. Guy F.4 Windley (Joseph Norcumb3, Jacob D.2, Henry E.1) was born Abt. 1870 in Washington County, NC, and died 1913. He married Margaret Sophia Bowen December 28, 1892 in Beaufort Co. NC, daughter of William Bowen and Alice Latham. She was born December 25, 1874 in Washington County, NC, and died April 26, 1967.

Notes for Guy F. Windley: The 1880 Washington Cty, NC Census Of Lee's Mill Township (west of Roper, NC) lists Guy Windley WM age 10, nephew living in the household of S.L. Gaylord a white female age 35; Alan Windley was listed as

Niece, WF, age 13. Assume these were the children of Joseph N. and Alice Gaylord Windley living with their Aunt Sara L. Gaylord, sister of Alice and daughter of John Fletcher Gaylord. Therefore Joseph and Alice must have died (or otherwise not in the picture) before 1880. Need 1870 census data.

Marriage Notes for Guy Windley and Margaret Bowen: Marriage Data Found in the NC Marriage Index.

More About Guy Windley and Margaret Bowen: Marriage: December 28, 1892, Beaufort Co. NC

Children of Guy Windley and Margaret Bowen are:

4. i. Joseph Norcomb Windley, Sr, b. October 09, 1895, Beaufort, NC; d. April 1954, Washington DC.

5. ii. Lindley Bowen Windley, Sr..

iii. Marion Leroy Windley, b. November 23, 1900, Hyde Co, NC; d. 1959; m. Sarah Elizabeth Gibbs, October 11, 1931, Rose Bay Baptist Church, Hyde Co, NC.

Notes for Marion Leroy Windley: CMOMM U. S. Navy

Marriage Notes for Marion Windley and Sarah Gibbs: Possibility, A quiet wedding took place in the Rose Bay Baptist Church, Sunday morning, October 11, at 9 a.m. when Mr. Marion Leroy Windley of Belhaven, N.C. was married to Miss Sarah Elizabeth Gibbs of Sladesville. Those witnessing the scene were Mrs. Theo Gibbs, Miss Marybelle Gibbs and Miss Irene Harris. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. E. R. Stewart.

More About Marion Windley and Sarah Gibbs: Marriage: October 11, 1931, Rose Bay Baptist Church, Hyde Co, NC

iv. Guy Windley JR..

v. Richard Windley.

vi. Mae Windley.

vii. Robert Windley.

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NOTES:

The Roanoke Beacon gave Vol. I, Washington County Cemeteries by Veronica Jones Haskett front page coverage - noting research was just

made easier with this publication. Orders have been good and response from some of you even greater. Order from WCGS at the following address: \$17 plus \$3 s/h. We are indebted to the Hasketts for making this available to the public.

Terri F. Mitchell is one member who reports unlocking a door in her search when she started reading the cemetery book.

At our last meeting, WCGS voted life memberships for Veronica Jones and Moody Vance Haskett, as a very small token of appreciation for the work done on surveying and preserving the information from county cemeteries. Thank You, Vance and Veronica.

Maude DeShields has been on the ailing list - we trust she's now fully recovered.

Our September meeting will be at Concord Primitive Baptist Church near Creswell. In lieu of our 3rd Sunday meeting, we will attend the homecoming where Lois Krawczyk will be speaker. Bring a covered dish to share - paper products will be furnished. (Bring a lawn chair!)

Please address any response to information in this issue to WCGS to be shared with others - if you respond only to the contributor, others may miss an important link in their own research. It is GREAT to have members as well as non-members share information. And - to the contributors - Thank You - if an error has been made, please inform the editor so corrections can be made.

Shirleyan Beacham Phelps

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Washington County Genealogical Society

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MAKE PLANS NOW TO BE AT CONCORD
SATURDAY - 15TH SEPT - 11 A.M.